

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application and the rejection of claims 1, 4, 5, 7-10, 12, 15-18 and 20 are respectfully requested. Applicant has attempted to address every objection and ground for rejection in the Office Action dated December 1, 2005 (Paper No. 20051123) and believes the application is now in condition for allowance. The claims have been amended to more clearly describe the present invention.

The Drawings stand objected to under 37 C.F.R. 1.84(p)(4) as the Examiner has argued that the same reference characters have been used to identify variations of the same name parts. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) have been provided and withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested. The Specification has been amended on pages 15-17 to reflect the renumbered drawings.

The Specification stands objected to because of minor informalities. Specifically, the Examiner submits that lines 1 on page 16 should read “section (10) of the body.” Applicant previously made this correction in Amendment A filed on November 14, 2005. (see Amendment A, Page 7). Accordingly, this objection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 20 stands rejected under §112 ¶2 as the Examiner argues that the releasing tool is an inferred element of claim 1, but is positively included as an element in dependent claim 20. Applicant has amended claim 20 so that it no longer positively recites the releasing tool. Accordingly, the rejection based on Section 112 is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7-10, 12, 16-18 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Howard (U.S. Pat. No. 3,473,202). Howard discloses a shaft-gripping element including a collar A and thin splint sleeve B. The collar A has a slot 12, leaving two adjacent faces 11 and 11', where face 11 has a threaded aperture 13 configured to threadably receive a screw 14. When the screw 14 is turned into the aperture 13, it makes contact with the slot face 11' and expands slot 12. (Col. 2, ll. 33-46 and 64-66; FIG. 1).

Howard explains that:

After the screw 14 is implaced the threaded hole is staked at 16....[W]hen the collar is locked on a shaft, screw 14 is free to turn in the hole. Staking the hole at 16 will prevent the screw from backing out of the hole 13.

(Col 2, lns 47-51)

In other words, screw 14 cannot be removed due to the physical deformation (staking) of the threaded aperture 13 that makes it impossible for screw 14 to be removed (backed out). At no point does Howard disclose or suggest that screw 14 can be removed out of the threaded hole.

The Examiner asserts that Howard discloses a securing apparatus "where the securing apparatus is only unlocked by the operation of the releasing tool with respect to the body and remains unlocked at all other times." (See December 1, 2005 Office Action at 4) The Applicant asserts that one of the main disadvantages of the device of Howard is that there is no way of readily visually determining whether or not it remains

locked at all other times. The spreading screw of Howard is positively recited as an essential feature of the prestressed shaft gripping element being “used for moving the faces apart under stress for increasing the diameter of the open gripping element.” The spreading screw is used in this fashion to increase the diameter to a point such that the collar can be fitted around a shaft.

In contrast, amended claim 1 recites, among other things, “wherein the securing apparatus is only unlocked by the operation of the releasing tool with respect to the body and remains locked at all other times, where the securing apparatus is fully unlocked by the operation of the releasing tool with respect to the body and is locked at all other only upon removal of the releasing tool and the absence of the releasing tool from the aperture ensures that the securing device is in a locked position by default...” Applicant submits that Howard fails to disclose all of the features recited in amended claim 1. Specifically, the releasing tool or screw 14 in Howard is not removed from the collar A, but instead is retained in the collar by staking 16 during use to adjust tension on the unit when the screw is turned, either expanding or contracting the collar. In contrast, the presently claimed releasing tool is fully removable from the securing apparatus, locking the securing apparatus when it is removed. Absence of the tool indicates that the apparatus is locked.

Claim 15 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Howard. The arguments stated above traversing Howard are reasserted here. Applicant submits that Howard fails to disclose or suggest all of the features recited in

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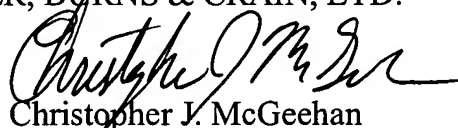
amended claim 1, from which claim 15 depends. Applicant further submits that in view of the amendments made to claim 1, claim 15 is in allowable form. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claim 15 under §103(a).

In view of the above amendments, the application is respectfully submitted to be in allowable form. Allowance of the rejected claims is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner discover there are remaining issues which may be resolved by a telephone interview, he is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

GREER, BURNS & CRAIN, LTD.

By



Christopher J. McGeehan
Registration No. 53,713

Customer No. 24978

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Greer, Burns & Crain, Ltd.
Suite 2500
300 S. Wacker Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60606-6501
Telephone: (312) 360-0080
Facsimile: (312) 360-9315

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IN THE DRAWINGS:

Please replace the previously filed Figures 4 and 5 with the attached,
amended Figures 4 and 5.